

October 13, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The West Virginia State University Extension Service, Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Area are glad to support the Huntington Area Revitalization Coalition and the Huntington Community Gardens Project in their pursuit of the Maudella Taylor Endowment Fund Grant. Serving as a State Coordinator for the Junior Master Gardener Program in West Virginia, my overall goal is to promote the program and all of its merits statewide. Through interaction in the past with the Huntington Community Gardens Project on the Junior Master Gardener program, we are proud of the working relationship that has developed and that will only be enhanced through this interaction.

The parameters set within this grant application fall right in line with the overall goals of the Junior Master Gardener curriculum. Emphasis is not only placed on the incorporation of healthy eating habits into a child's daily practice, it also works to instill knowledge of how to grow your own food and prepare it at home- a skill that can last a lifetime. With experience in greenhouse and hydroponic production, I am more than willing to provide one on one interaction with the youth in the greenhouse setting to help educate them on greenhouse and hydroponic production methods that could provide them with marketable skills desirable within the greenhouse production industry. I am also excited to bring activities to the youth through the various Junior Master Program curriculums, concentrating on basic plant propagation techniques as well plant needs.

With a push over the past few years toward sustainability and self-sufficiency, I can not think of a better way to instill in our youth the importance of growing your own food and the sense of community that can arise from such a simple interaction. If this program is awarded one of the grant awards, I am sure that the granting agency will be impressed with the end result. It is important to bring this education to the youth of the Huntington area, especially now that it has been denoted as the unhealthiest city in America. There is only room to improve from this standing and I feel that this program has the capability to start the ball rolling in the right direction.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa Stewart  
West Virginia State University Extension Service  
Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent  
Junior Master Gardener State Coordinator